

Scottie's Torticollis

By: Brenda Aufderhar, RN, CST

Scottie was a 6-month-old male that had been diagnosed with torticollis at three months of age. His head was off center to the right. He had been delivered with forceps. He had been receiving physical therapy for three months now and was on a daily home muscle-stretching program that the parents administered. He was not making progress in his physical therapy so the doctors were suggesting surgery to cut and lengthen several of the muscles on the neck to correct the asymmetry. The Surgery date was in December and I was seeing Scottie for the first time in mid-October. His parents reported Scottie's daily routine of screaming through his muscle-stretching exercises. Other parents were willing to do whatever it would take to avoid surgery. On the initial visit his parents reported that Scottie did not sleep lying down but in a swing for naps and all night.

In working with children I know what I do will happen easier if I blend and meld with the family unit first and then with the child. I started with my hand on mom's knee, the other hand on Scottie's knee as he sat in mom's lap and my intentional eye contact with dad. When the melding with the family until was done, I put both hands on Scottie at his pelvic diaphragm as he sat in mom's lap. While I had arced to the right side of his head I stayed at his tight sacrum and L-5, S-1 to build more trust and to gently work into the other end of the system. I did move up later to the thoracic inlet, hyoid, occiput and temporals, and addresses the right lateral strain in the sphenoid. Scottie screamed through all the cranial vault work. His parents said that his scream for me was worse than they had ever heard. After his first CST session his parents reported that he no longer screamed through his muscle stretching exercises at home. This was a big change because he had been screaming though daily exercises for three months now. His parents were ecstatic at this simple change. After the second session Scottie had his routine every other week physical therapy appointment. The therapist was so surprised to find that Scottie did not scream and while he had come to stand still in not meeting his goals he now met several of them all at once. Scottie had met previous goals before but in slow increments and never several at once like this.

Throughout the CST treatments I continued to address the various bones of the cranial vault. His temporals were rotating opposite and the right temporal would not wobble at first. The retro-hyoid muscles were slowly releasing their pull to the right side. Each visit I had to spend time addressing beyond the cranial bones to the cranial membranes and each time there was more flexibility. The parents noted that before CST Scottie had been waking every hour throughout the night screaming and after the 3rd visit was only waking twice a night and not screaming.

A four handed treatment was scheduled to help address the two ends of the cranial system at the same time. We also had to work with a strong twist that had set into the rib cage. After the 4 handed treatment his body felt ready to benefit from seeing a pediatric chiropractor to help adjust the cervical bones themselves that were now no longer being pulled by the muscles. The parents proudly reported after seeing the chiropractor Scottie was discharged from physical therapy and in a follow-up visit with the surgeon, his parents were told that there appeared to be no need for surgery now.

For Scottie there were 7 total CST treatments. They were all done weekly with the last one being a follow up a month after the 6th visit. There was one four handed visit to help him get beyond a stuck place we were at in his system. The cost for CST was \$520, which was not covered by insurance. The cost to the parents for physical therapy, surgeon's and doctor's visits around the tortocollis diagnosis had been about \$500. Scottie's parents are grateful for the changes and only wish that they had started the craniosacral work sooner.

"We would have gotten more sleep sooner and spent less time worrying", said Scottie's mom.